Passing off Financial benefits arising out of over pricing of rice to the farmers

2502. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the FCI has not passed on financial benefits arising out of over pricing of rice to the farmers; and

(b) the steps proposed to ensure compliance with fair trade practices by FCI?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a) and (b) The price at which paddy is purchased from the formers, *i.e.* Minimum Support Price (MSP) as well as the price at which rice is accepted from the millers are fixed by the Government.

Similarly, the Central Issue Prices (CIP) of foodgrains distributed through Public Distribution System are also fixed by the Government. CIP is fixed well below the economic cost and no profit is earned by FCI.

FCI is not a commercial organisation with profit as an objective, and all of its operations are subsidised by the Government. FCI is an undertaking of Government of India which aims at rendering service to farmers and consumers purely as a service organisation. Since the element of profit motive is absent, the question of not following fair trade practices does not arise.

Proposal to enhance the wage ceiling of social insurance coverage under the ESI scheme

2503. SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND:
DR. RANBIR SINGH:

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to enhance the wage ceiling for social insurance coverage under ESI Scheme and the rate of contribution; and

(b) if so, the details thereof with background and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM): (a) and (b) The Labour Ministers' Conference of major States and the ESIC have recommended enhancement of the wage ceiling for coverage under the ESI Scheme from Rs. 3000/- to Rs. 6500/- per month and also for enhancement of rate of contribution of the employers and the employees from 4% to 4.75% and from 1.50% to 1.75% of the monthly wage respectively. Accordingly, a notification to carry out necessary amendments in the ESI (Central) Rules, 1950 has since been issued inviting objections/suggestions of all concerned.

Operations of captive power plants in Durgapur, Rourkela and Bokaro

2504. SHRI JIBON ROY: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the captive power plants in Durgapur, Rourkela and Bokaro are being operated at below capacity because of the power purchase agreement signed long back between these plants and DVC;

(b) if so, the steps taken to restore the position of the full capacity utilisation of captive power plants in these industries; and

(c) if not, the figure of capacity utilisation in those plants since 1994?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) to (c) No, Sir. Only Captive Power Plant (CPP) of Durgapur Steel Plant (DSP) is running below capacity due to minimum guaranteed energy charge clause in power supply agreement of DSP with DVC.

Capacity utilisation of Durgapur, Rourkela and Bokaro Steel Plants since 1993-94 is as under:—

Plant	Capacity utilisation (%)			
	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97 (April—Nov)
DSP	48.3	48.1	48.5	54.5
RSP	60.1	59.5	60.4	67.3
BSL	56.9	58.8	50.2	49.9

Reasons for low capacity utilisation at Bokaro and Rourkela Steel. Plants are ageing of boilers, diversion of steam from Power Plant to meet the process requirements of steel plant and changed fuel scenario etc. Major renovation programmes have been undertaken in BSL and RSP to overcome these problems.

Major decisions taken at "The World Food Summit' in Rome

2505. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM:
SHRI RAMACHANDRAN PILLAI:

Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) the major decisions of the World Food Summit in Rome;

(b) the steps India intends to take on the basis of those decisions; and

(c) the details of the Indian stand during the summit?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a) to (c) The Indian delegation participated in the plenary meeting of the World Food Summit and urged Global coalition to promote agricultural development based on technologies which are eco-friendly. It urged industrialised countries to give up their restrictive policies on agricultural trade, encouraged production of primary agricultural commodities in developing countries through appropriate pricing incentives and summon political will to undertake joint action to eradicate hunger. To implement this a suggestion was also made to set up agencies at three levels, *viz.* global, regional and national levels charged with the specific responsibility to implement the Summit's Programme of Action. The Summit adopted what is called the Rome Declaration with specified objectives and programmes and Plan of Action.

Most of the programmes and the Plan of Action identified in the Rome Declaration are already an important part of the plans and policies pursued by various departments of the Government. Further discussions are taking place to evolve a suitable mechanism for implementing the Plan of Action and programmes incorporated in the Rome Declaration.

Reopening of sick industries in the North East

2506. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the steps Government propose to take to reopen the sick industries in North East;

(b) whether Government have conducted any survey recently about the sick industries of North East, particularly in Assam;

(c) if so, the latest position of Pan-chgram Paper Mill (HPC);

(d) the Government's thinking about it; and

(e) reasons for the Badarpur Textile Industry (Assam) being not made opera tive?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) Data on sick industrial units assisted